

rocks in considerable abundance. *Rubus Chamæmorus* was plentiful on the lower parts of the hill, while *Vaccinium Oxycoccus* occurred sparingly. Dr. Balfour corroborated Mr. Stark's account of the uninteresting character of Ben Wyvis as a botanical field.

Mr. Stark exhibited portions of the wood of *Tanghinia venenifera*, a poisonous tree, native of Madagascar; *Sterculia platanifolia*; *Bombax Ceiba*, the silk cotton-tree; and leaves of *Theophrasta Jussieui*. The specimens, which were of considerable dimensions, were grown in this country.

Specimens of fossil earth, containing Diatomaceæ, found in Aberdeenshire, were sent by Dr. Dickie, and exhibited under the microscope.

Mr. James M'Nab exhibited a flowering plant of *Meconopsis aculeata*, from the garden of the Caledonian Horticultural Society, seeds of which were received from the Himalaya mountains by the late Sheriff Speirs.

## MISCELLANEOUS.

### ORIGIN OF THE NAME VANESSA.

IN reply to our correspondent who inquires respecting the origin of the name *Vanessa*, first given, we believe, by Fabricius to a species, and afterwards to one of those genera into which he divided the genus *Papilio* of Linnæus, we have no doubt he must have been indebted for it to Swift's well-known poem *Cadenus and Vanessa*, the former appellation being an anagram of *Decanus*, whilst by the latter the poet designated the victim of her unhappy attachment to him, *Esther* (or *Hessy*) *Vanhomrigh*.

In the great demand for new names which Fabricius had to assign to the novelties which he was occupied in describing, after having availed himself of classical mythology and poetry, and scripture history, we find evidence, in the names *Gonerilla*, *Cordelia*, and perhaps *Morna*, that he sometimes had recourse also to the names occurring in the literature of our own country, where he was long engaged in examining the Banksian and other cabinets.

M. Sodoffsky has sported a very superfluous critical conjecture (*Bull. Soc. Impériale des Naturalistes de Moscou*, 1837) that the name should be written *Phanessa*, as if it were derived from the Greek *Φάνης*. But it can never be supposed, that if such had been the intention of Fabricius, he would have written *Vanessa*.—R. T.

### LUCERNARIA FASCICULARIS, *Fleming*.

The Rev. Z. M. Hamilton, of Bressay, Zetland, has ascertained that this beautiful zoophyte feeds upon the young *Littorina littorea*. In a letter to Dr. Neill of the 3rd of March, he writes, "I discovered that it feeds on small wilks, which it, by means of its arms and feelers, puts into its stomach, so many even as four or five at a time, and when the meat is fully extracted the shells are rejected."

In a subsequent communication (20th of March) to Dr. Neill, Mr. Hamilton says,—“With regard to the food which this creature seems